

Editorials

To Life!

It is time for everyone who believes in the sanctity of life, from the womb to the tomb as has been said, to quit nitpicking, intramural squabbling, internecine criticism and join in a concerted effort to stem the tide of liberalized abortion. The fact may be that the other side, those who support liberalized abortion, feels that it is losing ground and thus will be stepping up its efforts.

For instance, Planned Parenthood has announced that it will take on a national leadership role in lobbying for abortion rights, according to its new president-delegate Faye Wattleton. She says this is necessary because a "vocal minority" threatens to obstruct the "reproductive freedom" of Americans and reverse abortion gains.

Ms. Wattleton sounds impressive. At 34, she is the youngest, the first woman, and the first black to head up Planned Parenthood. She will be making \$70,000 a year and will be responsible for administering a budget of more than \$90 million. Who or what in the pro-life movement can match that kind of financial clout?

These figures are gleaned from a Religious News Service report on some of Ms. Wattleton's expressed opinions as she prepares for her new job. Unfortunately we sense a bit of religious bigotry when she talks of a "few organizations and individuals whose concern is not with human rights and reproductive health, but with imposing their own personal and religious dogmas upon everyone else."

Such a statement is not very impressive for someone in such a prestigious position. You can find religious prejudice in the lowliest of minds. Any cause dependent on it will suffer in the long run. So please. Discuss, if we may. Argue, if we must. But in the interest of the "human rights" Ms. Wattleton so casually mentions, let us not stoop to bigotry.

By now, most Americans realize that the pro-life or anti-abortion movement is not controlled by any one religion nor are its adherents drawn from one denomination. Mainly it is a grass roots movement which has always been leery of "official" hierarchical leadership because it might be mistakenly misinterpreted by many and because it would be deliberately abused by some.

Of course, the Holy Father and the American bishops have the duty to explain Church teachings to their flock in view of such a complicated and popular movement as liberalized abortion. Could anyone reasonably expect them to be silent?

And we all know that there are no easy answers. God knows, many well-intentioned people have been struggling for years to solve the problem without resorting to vilification.

To be sure, other denominations have taken an equally strong position as have Catholics — the Mormons (who recently were grouped with the Ku Klux Klan in an amazing example of the extent to which certain ideologues will go to make a point) and Orthodox Jewry. In addition, countless others of many denominations are pro-life so let us not hear any more of a "vocal minority."

Pro-abortionists may feel that their grip on the American psyche is slipping. Thus announcements of renewed efforts, thus the stepped up appeal to religious prejudice, thus the increasing visibility in the abortion cause of organizations such as Planned Parenthood.

At this time, it would be foolish for all concerned with perpetuating the struggle for life — whether as regards abortion, renewed appeals for the death penalty or in the face of carnage across the world — to hang back and refuse to be counted.

Let us support the work of all those who have long labored against liberalized abortion — often without even moral support from many who claim to be for life. Let us not accept hostile criticism. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to the pro-life effort.

And let us defend, as we must, human life in all its stages.

Opinion

DPC Retreat Help Lauded

Editor:

The contribution to the Diocesan Pastoral Council retreat project by the sisters at the Cenacle was essential. Sisters Betty Rogers, RC; Evelyn Bailey, RC; Shirley Kitagawa, RC; and Margaret Mary Mattle, RSM, contributed their time and talents to the organization of the retreat.

I am sure that without their insights, skills, generosity of spirit and real hospitality this project for the DPC could not have become a reality.

Hilda Stebbins 253 Oriole Dr. Horseheads, N.Y.

It is written to rabble-raising music and listened to by impressionable young people. Music is a beautiful, powerful and meaningful way to communicate. Most young people are in a lonely and desperate way searching for some meaning to life in the presence of adults who are doing the same. They are seeking some healthy relief from the daily pressure of just growing up. How unfair to allow their vulnerability to be exploited. Music has the potential of fostering spontaneity, creativity and community in the most humble of circumstances. Music should celebrate life — not condemn it!

Karen Finucane McNamara 222 Long Meadow Cir. Pittsford, N.Y. 14534

Column Missed

Editor:

It was interesting to be told when I telephoned the Courier-Journal that Nancy Murphy's column has been dropped in an effort to revamp the editorial pages and to run more Right to Life material. However, I feel that her work has been basic in helping families establish real respect for life, and I question the advisability of considering her work concluded.

Mrs. Murphy has received three letters of commendation from His Excellency John Cardinal Wright, head of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in Rome. He has called her "constructive, truly Catholic work" a "heavy responsibility." He has expressed his "increasing admiration" of her work "in a place where it is badly needed."

Although the Courier-Journal frequently runs portions of papal speeches, it is Nancy Murphy who has chiefly brought the voice of the Vatican into play on matters of local controversy such as UNICEF, values clarification, sterilization in Catholic hospitals, sex education in Catholic schools and the magisterium of the Church.

Even those persons who admit — against Church teaching — multiple magisteria should be distressed at the dropping of "Life, Liberty and Law," for Mrs. Murphy's writing in defense of Catholic life issues has served as a cutting edge in that conflict that is basic to their false notion of progress!

Mrs. Murphy was always very careful in the ways in which she researched her column. In the event that she is not reinstated would the Courier-Journal consent to print a bibliography with addresses of her major sources where Catholic parents can write to continue to obtain the truly Catholic information that Mrs. Murphy shared so generously?

A few that come to mind are:

Msgr. Kevane's Pontifical Catechetical Institute, Contraternity of Catholic



Clergy (Father Miceli), Sean O'Reilly on sex education, Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, CREDO (evaluations of Catholic textbooks), Marriage and Family Newsletter, Alternatives to Abortion, International, Human Life Review, National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guilds.

Judith B. Echaniz (Mrs. Jose M.) 347 Barrington St. Rochester, N.Y. 14607

Editor:

I find it very difficult to understand how a supposedly Catholic newspaper such as the Courier-Journal can drop a columnist of Nancy Murphy's caliber. Surely no one can dispute the fact that Mrs. Murphy's column, "Life, Liberty and Law" was steeped in the truths of the Catholic Faith. One never had any reason to fear reading her column, as is so painfully evident in others seemingly oblivious to the Catholic Faith. Her profound depth in the theological field, and her steady refusal to present "watered-down" Catholicism has produced a column of unspeakable admiration by all who remain faithful to Christ and His Church.

It was in "Life, Liberty and Law" that the Vatican was presented so clearly. It was also in this column that we readers witnessed the courageous battlings of a true "defender of the Faith," yielding to nothing to save the truth.

In the final analysis, I have no idea what will replace the column nor if any reason as to why it was dropped will be forthcoming. However, my opinion is that the thinking of the Courier-Journal has undeniably lapsed into mental paralysis. And as a newspaper responsible to the Catholic people of the Rochester diocese, I would hope a reflection upon themselves is in process if they are to maintain any credibility as a Catholic newspaper.

Richard V. Hussar 340 Jordan Ave. Rochester, N.Y. 14606

Editor:

Please put Nancy Murphy's column "Life, Liberty and Law" back into the Catholic Courier. Her sharp attack on the abortion mentality went far beyond the usual pro-life editorials which tend to be too

emotional and too one-issue oriented. She attacked the whole abortion spectrum wherever she found it even when she found it on the doorsteps of some Catholic schools, under the guise of a "pluralistic approach" through Threshold, Planned Parenthood, AAASECT, SIECUS, UNICEF and Sidney Simon's Value Clarification.

Hers was the only column to expose the federal government's involvement in the sterilization of thousands of American Indians out west. And the only which consistently attacked Marxism. None of your social action writers have done a thing about either situation.

Speaking as an informed non-Catholic mother, I found her columns honest and stimulating. Her research was superb. Her public talks were informative. Certainly no one else at the Courier can match her style. So bite your good liberal fingernails and put Murphy back into the paper.

Mrs. Mary Arthur 1855 Monroe Ave. Rochester, N.Y. 14618

Editor:

When I leafed through the Courier today to read the column I always read first; I discovered it wasn't there.

I certainly hope Nancy Murphy will be back soon. Hers is one of the shining lights of your paper. She gives so much hope and support to those who are bringing up children in an amoral society. She reminds of the solid teachings of the Roman Catholic Church regarding abortion, contraception and other sins against God's law. Her series on Values Clarification was especially helpful to those of us who know that we, as parents, have the right and the obligation to teach values to our children.

Mary Ellen Smith 216 E. Gibson St. Canandaigua, N.Y. 14424

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1-1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

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